

# World War II Chronology, 1922 - 1941

## The Origins of World War II



# 1922: The Rise of Benito Mussolini

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- ▶ The first of the fascist dictators to take power in Europe during the World War I period was Benito Mussolini. His party railed against the Treaty of Versailles because Italy – a nation which had literally switched sides during the war – felt that it was not sufficiently rewarded for their efforts to achieve victory.



Mussolini taught school children to recite, “Mussolini is always right!”

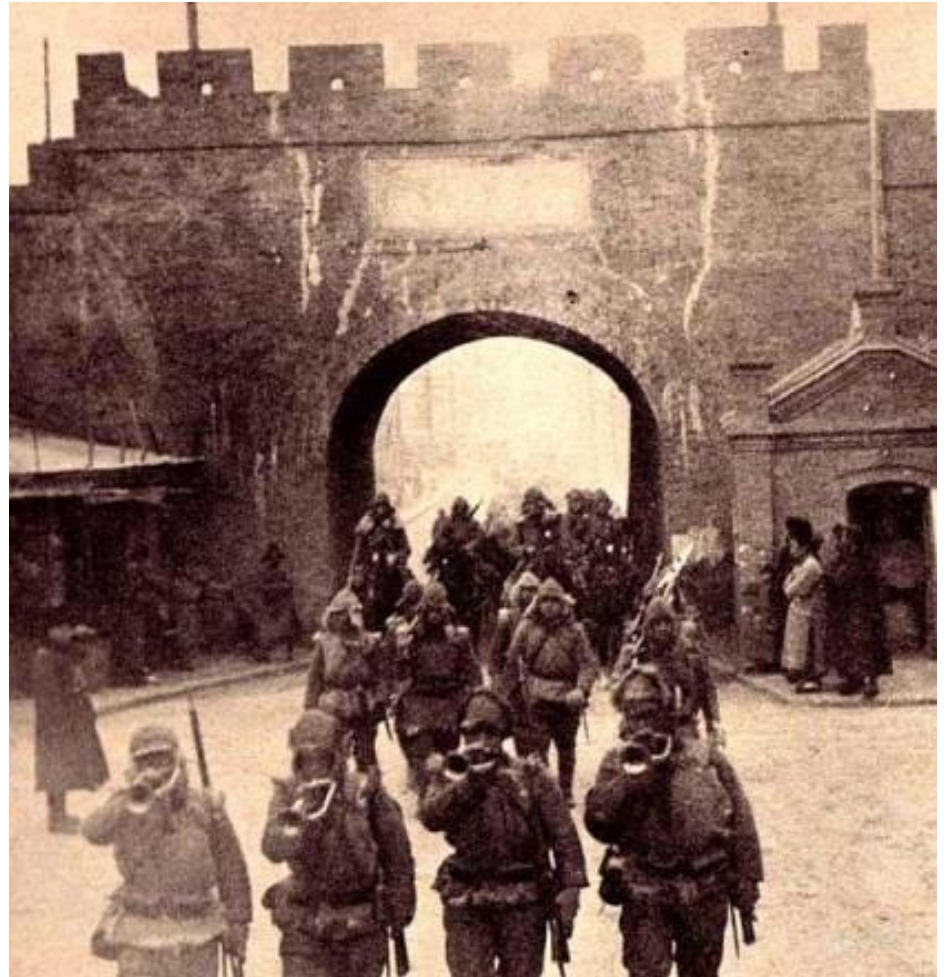
“When fascism comes to America, it will come wrapped in the American flag and carrying a cross.”

- Sinclair Lewis, 1935

# The Invasion of Manchuria, 1931

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- ▶ The Japanese had occupied and colonized Korea since the 1910s. In 1931, the Japanese launched an invasion of Manchuria, the region of China located north of the Korean peninsula. Although it is seldom recognized as such, in many ways, this was the opening salvo of World War II. The Japanese brutally subjugated their Chinese Rivals.





# The Neutrality Acts: American Isolationism

- ▶ The people of the United States were not at all inclined to participate in another war in the 1930s. Many felt that US intervention in World War I had been of little value; thus, another war seemed hazardous. Neutrality Acts passed in 1935, 1937, and in 1939 all placed serious restrictions on how much the United States government could support our allies in Europe. They forbid the loaning of money to allies, and put heavy restrictions on arms manufacturers who wanted to send weapons abroad.



# The Japanese Invade China, 1937: The Rape of Nanking

The aggression of the Japanese worsened in 1937, when a full fledged invasion of China began. Among their most violent crimes against humanity during this period was the “Rape of Nanking” in China. The atrocities which the Japanese carried out against Chinese victims were horrifying, and the war was a brutal one.







## September, 1938: The Policy of Appeasement - The Munich Pact

What was Neville Chamberlain thinking? How could anyone actually trust the word of Adolf Hitler in 1938? Well, at the time, it still seemed possible that war could be avoided. When Hitler signed the Munich Pact, he was promising not to invade any more territory, as long as he could keep all of the land he had conquered. It was a slap on the wrist – and an affirmation for Hitler that his methods would work: he had gained territory and resources through aggression.

# The Night of November 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 1938. Kristallnacht – “The Night of Broken Glass”

In Germany, the night of broken glass was the a bell in the night for most Jewish citizens. An organized pogrom authorized and provoked by the Nazi government, the rioting resulted in arsons against synagogues and the destruction of Jewish owned stores. The rosters of Jewish synagogue members were taken, and all Jewish men capable of labor were arrested in the aftermath of the rioting. Being careful not to provoke an international incident, no foreign national were molested in the ordeal by the Nazis. Most nations, the United States included, expressed shock and regret, but did little else in response to this clear assault on the liberties of Jewish citizens of Germany.

## The New York Times.

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Build  
**NAZIS SMASH, LOOT AND BURN  
JEWISH SHOPS AND TEMPLES  
UNTIL GOEBBELS CALLS HALT**





# German Aggression

- ▶ In 1938, the world began to be truly alarmed. After the *Anschluss*, Hitler claimed the many of the people of the Sudetenland – a part of Czechoslovakia – were in fact Germans, and that Germany must protect them by annexing the region. The Munich Conference ensued. English Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain met with Hitler, and a pact was made to cede the Sudetenland, but to end all German aggression there. It failed, as well. In the spring of 1939, Hitler seized the remainder of Czechoslovakia.





# August, 1939: The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact Between Hitler and Stalin

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- ▶ Josef Stalin and the USSR signed an agreement not to fight with the Nazis. In fact, the two nations agreed to simultaneously invade Poland and split up the nation's territory. Predicting that the alliance was not likely to survive for very long, England and France chose only to declare war against Nazi Germany.



# September 1, 1939: Poland is Crushed

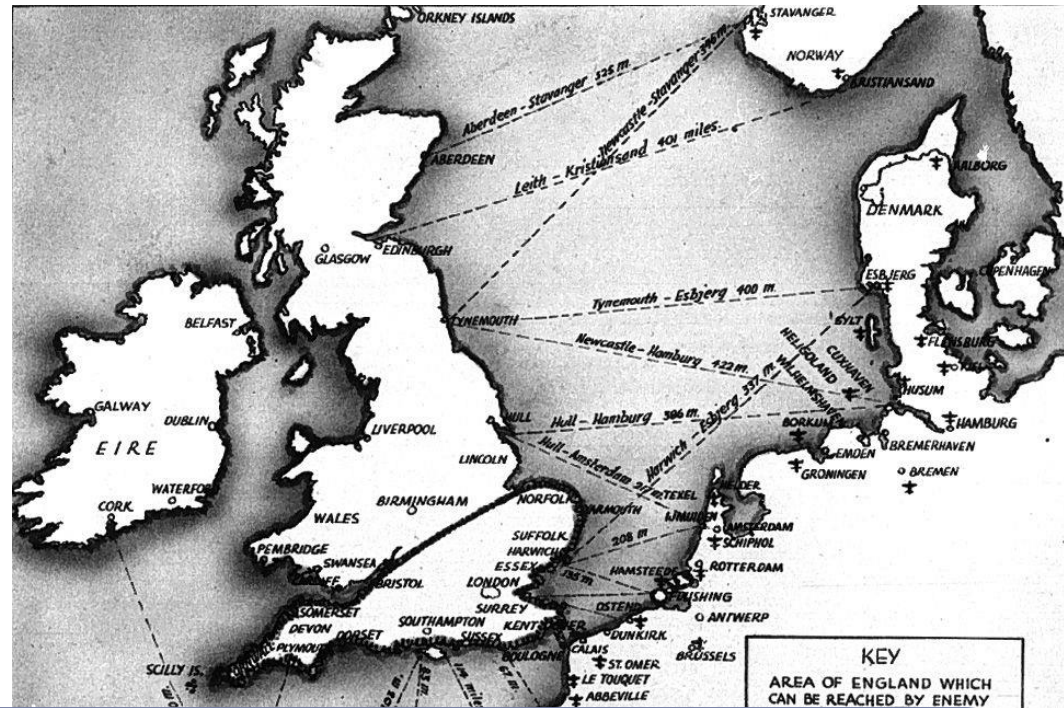
When evaluating the tense relationship between the USSR and England and The United States, it is important to recall the origins of the war. After all, when Poland was crushed in 1939, it was not only the Nazi who invaded the beleaguered nation. Indeed, the USSR invade the east of Poland (and Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland) even as the Nazis invaded from the West.





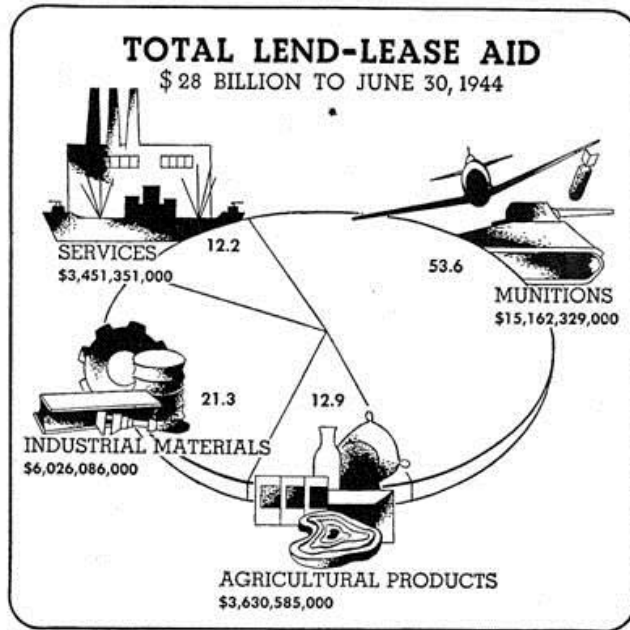
# The Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain ensued immediately after the fall of France. Hitler was convinced that he could bomb the English into submission, and began to rain ordinance over the civilian centers of London and other cities. The English simply moved underground. They sent their children to the countryside, and prepared for an assault upon the beachheads that never came.



“We shall defend our Island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.” – Winston Churchill

# The Lend-Lease Act



- ▶ Franklin Roosevelt was at his best when he convinced Americans that the Lend-Lease Act was “like lending a neighbor your garden hose when their house caught fire.” In fact, this was a dramatic step towards active involvement in World War II. The act allowed Americans to lend, lease, or provide weapons to any nation deemed vital to our own national security. The United States, Roosevelt claimed must become an “Arsenal for Democracy” and send “guns, not sons” to Europe to defeat the Axis Powers. Some supporters of intervention believed that the act did not go far enough.



# Operation Barbarossa



In the summer of 1941, Hitler broke the so-called Non-Aggression Pact with Stalin and launched a massive invasion of the Soviet Union: Operation Barbarossa. The Soviet Union was not caught off guard, but they were completely unprepared for the attack. It is speculated the Josef Stalin had an emotional breakdown at the start of the attack – radio silence prevailed for several days. However, when Stalin returned to leadership, he became the symbolic protector of all the Russians.

# The Atlantic Charter

- ▶ Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Winston Churchill met off the coast of Newfoundland in August of 1941, and agreed that democratic nations must rule Europe, and that fascist nations must be defeated. FDR did not and could not declare war – only Congress could – yet, he meant to “wage war, but not declare it, and that he would become more and more provocative...to force an incident” with Germany.





# THE Atlantic Charter

THE President of THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA and the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, representing HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, being met together, deem it right to make known certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.

1. *Their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other.*

2. *They desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.*

3. *They respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.*

4. *They will endeavor, with due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity.*

5. *They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement and social security.*

6. *After the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling*

*in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.*

7. *Such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance.*

8. *They believe that all of the nations of the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force. Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments.*

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

August 14, 1941

## The Atlantic Charter of 1941

The Atlantic Charter was definitely anti-Germany, claiming, "After the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford to all nations the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want." FDR wanted to support Churchill more openly, but lacked the power to declare war.

# Pearl Harbor

- ▶ On December 7, 1941, a Sunday morning, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by the Empire of Japan. FDR would go the Congress the following day to formally ask Congress to declare war on Japan. It only took a few days to also declare war on Germany, and to prioritize the defeat of the Nazis.

